



**Washington State  
Department of Transportation**

# **Public Involvement Plan**

**Snoqualmie Hyak to Easton  
I-90 Improvements**

***Project Engineer***

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**DRAFT  
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# **Public Involvement Plan**

## **Snoqualmie Hyak to Easton Hill - Interstate 90 Improvements**

Project Engineer: Paul Gonseth 509.454.7258

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### **Introduction**

The following is a draft Public Involvement Plan for the Washington State Department of Transportation's (WSDOT) proposed improvements to Interstate 90 (I-90) near Snoqualmie Pass.

The intent of the plan is to initiate a process that is accessible, inclusive and proactive. WSDOT strives to educate and inform the public about transportation projects and provide opportunities to contribute ideas and opinions early and often through the planning process. This document is designed to provide a framework for the public involvement process which will be applied to the proposed improvements. This document contains pertinent project background information, public involvement goals, target audiences, strategies and tactics for implementing an effective public involvement process, and a draft project schedule. It is offered as a road map for people who wish to be involved in decision-making related to improvements to this portion of I-90, with the caveat that specific activities and schedules could change as the project unfolds.

### **Background**

Transportation is an essential part of Washington's economic health. Interstate 90 is the main east-west transportation corridor across Washington state and is vital to the state's economy, including shipping, recreation and business travel. More than 28,000 vehicles cross the pass daily, including 8,000 freight trucks. Traffic over the pass is expected to at least double in the next 20 years. A sound multimodal transportation system is needed to support our existing economy, to facilitate desired growth, to reduce the costs of congestion and inefficiency, and to link us together to promote success in all regions.

Washington is the most trade-dependent state in the country, according to the Washington State Economic Development Board. We are uniquely positioned as a gateway to the global economy. Maintaining transportation connections between ports, manufacturing industrial centers, agricultural regions, and other key locations directly impacts the health of the state's economy.

Washington state has the advantage of a diverse geography and economy. Whether agriculture, wood products, fishing, aerospace, biomedical, manufacturing, technology-related or other industry - all depend on the transportation network to move customers, employees, goods and supplies. A sound network means lower transportation costs which are then passed on to consumers as lower prices for goods, to workers as higher wages, and to owners of businesses as higher income.

Interstate 90 spans 300 miles in Washington from the Port of Seattle to the Idaho state line, and continues East across the United States. WSDOT is developing a plan which will improve a portion of this corridor on the east side of Snoqualmie Pass, from Milepost 55 (Snoqualmie Hyak vicinity) to Milepost 67 (west of Easton). This section is part of what once was old US Highway 10, the Sunset Highway. The main alignment was constructed in the 1950's, consisting of a two-lane concrete road and highlighted with a snowshed protecting the roadway in one location. In the 1970's two more concrete lanes were added and it became part of the country's Interstate Highway System, I-90. When these lanes were added, they followed old Highway 10 and used the existing road for the eastbound lanes. The existing snowshed was not rebuilt at this time, leaving the new westbound lane prone to avalanches. Since that time the rest of I-90 in Washington state has been rebuilt to higher interstate standards.

This project proposes to address the following problems:

- The life of the roadway has been extended by interim overlay and grind work, however, the structural depth of the roadway has been decreased.
- This is the only rural section of I-90 with a posted speed limit of under 70 MPH, which is the current standard for an interstate highway. The existing alignment does not meet standards for 70 MPH traffic.
- The roadway and bridges will not easily accommodate future expansion to a six-lane facility.
- Snow storage from plowing operations throughout this section is an ongoing problem for WSDOT maintenance crews.
- Vertical clearances and bridge widths at the Stampede and Cabin Creek Interchanges and the West Bound Snowshed are inadequate.
- Frequent avalanches at the East Snowshed and Slide curve areas cause road closures throughout the winter.
- Rock slides and settlement areas often result in lane closures and prolonged maintenance efforts.

WSDOT's goals are to define, prioritize, fund and construct projects that will correct these problems. This will result in improved efficiency and capacity, reduced maintenance costs, and reduced road closures. We will also strive to minimize environmental impacts, maintain and restore aesthetics, and address the concerns of the public.

## **Public Involvement Goal and Objectives**

### ***Goal***

Our goal is to provide ample opportunity for soliciting public comment and input on proposed improvements needed for this portion of Interstate 90.

### ***Objectives***

The objectives of this public involvement process are to:

- Inform potentially impacted parties that the project is a priority for WSDOT and is in the planning stage;
- Increase awareness about road deficiencies and how they impact the public;

- Offer opportunities for public involvement in the project decision-making process; and
- Conduct public information, communication, and public involvement activities in such a way that people know that their concerns and ideas were considered.

Public involvement for this project will be proactive. The Public Involvement Plan strives to anticipate and address public concerns so that they might form positions and offer advice on the project as fully-informed citizens. A proactive approach will create a bridge between the technical work being conducted as part of the project and the concerns of those who live, work, and travel through the corridor, but who may not have extensive technical training or understanding. It is our intent to inform as many citizens as possible about the project and to involve them in the planning stages, prior to construction or operational changes that impact them directly.

This approach to public involvement meets and exceeds the legal requirements for public notices and hearings, and includes extensive media outreach, direct mail, public meetings and meetings with key individual contacts.

## **Target Audiences**

People who have an interest in this project, and who might become involved if given the opportunity, are referred to as “stakeholders.” The stakeholders in this Public Involvement Plan are largely geographically derived. In fact, all citizens of Washington state should be considered stakeholders of this project in that it has statewide impacts and benefits and is financed with state tax dollars. People who live and work along the proposed project corridor have a need for active involvement. Others who would not be directly impacted but who would be affected by the construction and operation also have a need for involvement.

The list of target audiences may include, but is not limited to, the following:

### **Government Agencies**

- Army Corps of Engineers (Corps)
- Chambers of Commerce
- Farm Bureau
- Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)
- Freight Mobility Strategic Investment Board
- Fruit Commission
- King County
- Kittitas County
- Law Enforcement Agencies
- Legislative Transportation Committee
- Legislators
- Port of Seattle
- Regional Transportation Planning Organizations
- US Bureau of Reclamation (USBR)
- US Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA)

- US Fish and Wildlife (USFW)
- US Forest Service (USFS)
- WA Department of Community, Trade and Economic Development (CTED)
- WA Department of Ecology (WSDOE)
- WA Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW)
- WA Department of Natural Resources (DNR)
- Washington State Patrol (WSP)
- Washington Transportation Commission
- Yakama Nation

#### **Other Public and Private Interests**

- 1000 Friends of Washington
- Agricultural Interests
- Audoban Society
- Bicycle Advocates
- Growth Management Advocacy Groups
- Mountains to Sound Greenway Trust
- Private Providers (Trucking)
- Project-Level EIS-Impacted Geographic Areas
- Property Rights Advocates
- Recreation Interests
- Sierra Club
- Tourism Advocates
- Trucking Association
- Unions
- Wilderness Society

## **Emerging Issues**

The following are issues which the project team has identified to date:

- roadway surface needs replacing (pavement)
- rock fall areas
- unstable fill slopes
- avalanche closures
- localized flooding
- snow storage
- vertical clearances on structures (load restrictions)
- old structures need replaced
- alignment does not meet interstate standards (low speed limit)
- miscellaneous closures (accidents & oversize detours)
- inadequate funding
- referendum 49

- congestion
- land use

The following are issues which have been identified by stakeholders:

- wildlife corridors
- water quality
- fish habitat
- headlight glare
- rest areas (open Price Creek)
- trucks crowding cars

## **Public Involvement Tools**

### ***Public Meetings***

Public meetings provide a point of dialogue between the project team and the public. Although meetings will be a part of the public process, they will not be the only opportunity for participation. Formal meetings will include Public Scoping Workshops, Public Alternative Review Workshops, and Public Hearings. Informal group or individual meetings can be requested by local or state officials, community or interest groups representing a specific geographic area or concern. Meetings will also be sought with targeted groups having a direct interest in the project.

Opportunities to register opinions through comment cards, public comment or direct interaction with the project team will be offered at all public meetings. The times, dates and locations of the meetings will be publicized in a number of ways. A calendar of project events will be published in each project newsletter (see *Newsletter*) and in newspapers listed under *Public Notices*, and on the project internet web site listed in *For Additional Information*.

### ***Public Notices***

Official public notices and invitations to comment will be placed as paid legal notices with local and regional newspapers. In addition, public meetings will also be announced in community calendars/newsletters, on the project web site, and in the project newsletter when possible.

Public notice will be placed in the following publications:

#### **Yakima County**

- Yakima Herald Republic

#### **King County**

- Seattle Post Intelligencer
- Snoqualmie Pass Times

**Chelan County**

- Wenatchee World

**Kittitas County**

- Daily Record (Ellensburg)
- North Kittitas County Tribune (Cle Elum, Press Releases Only)

***Internet Communications***

The project internet web site will carry relevant information. The purpose of this site will be to provide information to the public about the project, solicit their opinions via e-mail, and to publicize public involvement activities. The site will be publicized in the press and updates will be made as needed to ensure that the public has access to current project information. Hard copies of all e-mail correspondence will be kept as part of the public record and requests for information will be routed to the project office for fulfillment.

***Mail Communication***

Mail communication will include letters of information and update, newsletters, community fact sheets, and post cards. Letters will be sent to policy makers describing the project and key project milestones along with opportunities for agency and public involvement. Newsletters will be developed to detail key project milestones prior to Public Alternative Review Workshops and targeted outreach, prior to Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) Review Workshops, and after the project is completed. Postcards with tear-off reply cards will be mailed to residents in affected areas along the corridor notifying of the project and opportunities for public involvement.

***Fact Sheets***

Community fact sheets that are geographically specific and provide more detailed information will be prepared about specific aspects or issues related to the project. They will be one to two page summaries explaining technical information in easy-to-understand language. Each fact sheet will include a response form for public feedback. They will be distributed at public meeting, briefings, presentations, and available upon request in hard copy and electronic format.

***Telephone Communication***

A toll-free telephone information number will be established. The public will be encouraged to call the WSDOT-staffed number with comments or questions.

***Media Relations***

Regular interaction with the media will be conducted to ensure that information is communicated to the public in a timely fashion. In addition to news releases, news briefings, media kits and paid advertising, opportunities for feature news stories will also be pursued. News releases will be issued at each major project milestone. Media briefings will be held when appropriate. Paid advertising of public meetings will be placed in local affected media.

***Other Information Tools***

In addition to utilizing the tools described above, every effort will be made to present information to the public in an easy to understand format. Visuals, including maps and/or graphics, will be prepared for use at public meetings and presentations.

### ***Tracking and Evaluation***

Regular tracking and evaluation, including ensuring that the public receives responses to inquiries and comments, and preparation of periodic status reports, will take place. Agency and community involvement will be carefully coordinated.

## **Public Involvement Strategies and Tactics**

Although communication channels will remain open and responsive throughout the project, timing of special activities and events will be coordinated with major legal requirements related to completion of the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). Throughout the EIS process, comments and inquiries will be accepted and incorporated by telephone, mail, in-person, and electronically. We will continue to develop our mailing lists and conduct media relations.

Public involvement will occur in four phases:

<b>Phase One</b>	<b>Establishment of Communications System</b>
<b>Phase Two</b>	<b>Public Review of Scope of Improvements</b>
<b>Phase Three</b>	<b>Public Review of Alternatives</b>
<b>Phase Four</b>	<b>Public Review of Draft Environmental Impact Study</b>

### ***Phase One***

#### **Establishment of Communications System**

*(Currently scheduled for June 1998 - April 1999)*

<b>Strategy</b>	<b>Tactic(s)</b>
Public Meetings	Policy Makers, Resource Agencies, Regulatory Agencies, Special Interest Groups
Public Notices	Per Meeting
Internet Communications	Establish E-Mail and Web Page
Mail Communication	Build Targeted Mailing Lists
Newsletter	
Fact Sheets	Purpose and Need
Telephone Communication	
Media Relations	
Other Tools	
Tracking and Evaluation	Incorporate Comments into Public Record and Alternatives

### ***Phase Two***

#### **Public Review of Scope of Improvements**

*(Currently scheduled for April 1999 - August 1999)*

<b>Strategy</b>	<b>Tactic(s)</b>
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Public Meetings	Corridor Workshops, Public Scoping Meetings, Special Interest Groups
Public Notices	Per Meeting
Internet Communications	Ongoing Web Updates and E-Mail
Mail Communication	Letter Targeted to Policy Makers, Libraries, Media Representatives, Mail Newsletter
Newsletter	Develop and Mail Newsletter #1
Fact Sheets	
Telephone Communication	Establish 800 Number
Media Relations	
Other Tools	
Tracking and Evaluation	Incorporate Comments into Public Record and Alternatives

### **Phase Three**

#### Review Alternatives

*(Schedule to be Announced)*

<b>Strategy</b>	<b>Tactic(s)</b>
Public Meetings	Project Alternatives Workshops, Special Interest Groups
Public Notices	Per Meeting
Internet Communications	Ongoing Web Updates and E-Mail, Release Alternatives
Mail Communication	Mail Newsletter and Fact Sheets
Newsletter	Develop Newsletter #2
Fact Sheets	Evaluation Criteria, Initial Alternatives
Telephone Communication	Ongoing
Media Relations	
Other Tools	
Tracking and Evaluation	Incorporate Comments into Public Record, Alternatives and EIS

### **Phase Four**

#### Review Draft Environmental Impact Study

*(Schedule to be Announced)*

<b>Strategy</b>	<b>Tactic(s)</b>
Public Meetings	Draft EIS Hearings, Special Interest Groups
Public Notices	Per Meeting
Internet Communications	Release Draft EIS
Mail Communication	Draft EIS Newsletter, Updated Fact Sheets
Newsletter	Develop Newsletter
Fact Sheets	Update Fact Sheets, EIS Fact Sheet, Engineering, Environmental, Preliminary Costs
Telephone Communication	Ongoing
Media Relations	
Other Tools	
Tracking and Evaluation	Incorporate Comments into Public Record, Alternatives and EIS

## **Public Involvement Opportunities**

The public can offer input to the process in the following ways:

- Fill out public notice reply postcard
- Call the project information 800 number
- Contact the project engineer by telephone, fax, letter or e-mail
- Schedule a presentation
- Attend and make comments at public meetings
- Interact via e-mail through the project address on the internet

The public can obtain information on this project through a number of resources:

- Sign up for the project mailing list to receive project newsletter
- Call the project information 800 number
- Attend public meetings
- Schedule a presentation
- Visit the project internet web site for updates, fact sheets, newsletters and technical information
- Read fact sheets
- Review technical specifications of project
- Look to the newspaper listed under Tools in this document for public meeting notices

## **For Additional Information**

To be included on the project mailing list or to obtain more information on the I-90 project and/or its public involvement plan, simply use one of the following methods:

### **Telephone**

Paul Gonseth, Project Engineer  
509.454.7273

### **Fax**

509.575.2240

### **E-Mail**

I90Snoqualmie@wsdot.wa.gov

### **By Mail**

Paul Gonseth, Project Engineer  
WSDOT - South Central Region  
PO Box 12560  
Yakima WA 98909-2540

**Additional information may be obtained from our web site:**

*[wsdot.wa.gov/regions/southcentral/I90Snoqualmie](http://wsdot.wa.gov/regions/southcentral/I90Snoqualmie)*



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